

Mrs. J.E. Cook
Calmar, Alberta.

CONJURING CREEK

Part 1: Written by J.E. Cook, former Edmonton newspaper reporter, also a member of the once famous "Taber Chefs" a hockey team made up of six cook boys who won the Alberta Provincial Hockey Championship in 1910-11.

Canada became a confederation in 1867. In 1905 a portion of Canada until that time part of the North West Territory was given autonomy as the Province of Alberta.

Edmonton in 1905 had developed from a stockaded fort into a town. In 1890 Edmonton and Calgary could be said to be definite places. Any intermediate point was territory. In the late years of the century the two were connected by steel rails. Along this line of railway there developed small villages and from these small villages there spread a settlement that, slowly at first, increased in momentum and volume until today every foot is charted and known and owned. Every road allowance is defined, fenced and graded to carry a traffic geared to a speed that is the natural outcome of the slower steady growth of the last thirty years.

In compiling the story of the early days of this district one realises our story is the story of all those districts in a long trail from south and east to north and west and will be the story of a land to the north now as virgin as was this in 1894.

Ours is a cross-section of the advance, the influx and increase of population, of industry and acreage. By

twos and threes, from here, there and everywhere our members have swelled. Many have stayed. Here tonight are many who came and endured and achieved a home and a heritage. Many saw other fields and passed on. It is an interesting thing in retrospect to call back to mind the numbers who have left their impress in the work of building up a community.

It is the great pleasure of this community of Conjuring Creek and Conjuring Lake, through the Wizard Lake Women's Institute, to welcome, to honor and to entertain and be entertained by you of that gallant, pioneering band who were responsible for the first threads in the woven texture of this district.

The lives and habits of the pioneer must be indelibly stamped and woven in that fabric and when we say that of our community we are proud. We pay compliment and homage to those who individually and collectively made this area from a natural wilderness into a succession of homes habited by a people still anxious to improve and progress.

And who were these pioneers? Of those who homesteaded we have the record from 1894 to date. The quarter section on which we now was homesteaded in 1899 by Geo. LaBelle, cancelled in May 1902 by A.E. Faulkner and patented by him in 1906.

The earliest filings in the area in which we are interested tonight was made in 1894. On the same day filings were made by (or for) George Wilkerson, William Wilkerson, Len Postle, Edward T. Buckle and Chas. T. Buckle. With

the exception of Len Postle whose filing was on N.W. 10-49-27, all these entrants were granted patent and all of them except Mr. Postle have since moved from the district.

Here is a list of entrants covering an area 6 miles east and west and 11 miles north and south with the range line between ranges 26 and 27 through townships 47 and 48 as the centre line. Closely following this range line is the course of Conjuring Creek having its source in Conjuring Lake and emptying north into the Saskatchewan River. Along this creek there settled the hardy pioneers of the district and development here exceeded that of areas much closer to the railway in the earlier days, forcing a social contact internal and independent to an unusual degree. To this we owe much of our community spirit of the present day. (To be preceded by list of filings)

Every patentee must have had a very definite part in the early development of the district, but certain of these names register very forcibly. The Buckle family were leaders in the early times and made their contribution to the social and economic life. Len Postal is still a valued citizen. George Wilkerson moved to the Clearwater district, east of Leduc and has a fine farm home surrounded by his sons, the first to be born in the Conjuring Creek district. John A. Sangster and his good wife were and still are the centre of a continuous activity along lines social and economic. Famous for their hospitality since 1899 when

extra accommodation was a matter of ingenuity and housewifely management, to 1930, an extra guest or any number of them has been assured a hearty welcome and a place at the Sangster table.

Thirty years ago this month Mr. Sangster carried to his place the first regular mail to the Conjuring Creek post office. He has been Post Master continuously since that date. His was the first store and the first telephone exchange. Born in Ontario in the centre of a district where political camouflage and intrigue is inherited, there is evidence of his persuasive way with a succession of members of the Legislature in the building of our early roads. Mark Anthony said: "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is often interred with their bones". It is a pleasure to be able to accord to Mr. and Mrs. Sangster as to the other of the old timers some measure of the praise that is their due for a lifetime of useful endeavour. Their particular thread in our community fabric is bright and strong.

Mr. and Mrs. Irving Ferris, Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. Stout, and Walter Sangster all played their part in the pioneering activities of the family.

Settlement in large measure was from the north to the south in this district. The early trail followed the Pigeon Lake trail west and south and in the settlement the township line between townships 49 and 48 was somewhat of a division. In 1899 and 1900 quarters were filed in 48-26 and 48-27. George Blondheim, C.J. Blondheim, and

their families; L.P. Emery, Ray Emery, and Lee Emery, Thomas Humble, Joseph Humble, Joe Gornick, Ed. Walton, Wm. A. Trumpour, Jesse Barker, Wm. Andrew Numma all filed, and one quarter section S.E. 28-48-26 deserves special mention. It was filed in 1900 by James Henry Hare, cancelled and filed by Chas. Benj. Rath, cancelled again in 1903 and filed by Wesley McCladdery in the same year; cancelled again in 1904 and filed by Andrew Jackson Dilley, transferred to Ovanda M. Dilley in 1905, and in 1907 was cancelled and filed by Chas. Henry Sheppard who obtained patent.

The Blondheim family were, to the southern area, a centre for dispersement. Hospitable, capable with tools and of pioneering stock, moving from Ontario to Michigan and then to Alberta, many less fortunately equipped found an ever ready help in times of need or stress. George Blondheim built his home on a hill and his front yard for years was a camping ground for settlers, many of whom had been neighbors or acquaintances in Ontario or Michigan, until such time and generally with the assistance of the Blondheim family the newcomer had located and established himself on his own homestead. C.J. Blondheim established a post office known as Blondheim which in later years since the advent of rural delivery has been discontinued.

With two families of growing boys and girls it was inevitable that these homes should have much to do with social affairs. From this beginning the family developed a place in local history that is second to none. Of George

Blondheim's family Stanley and Walter have homes here now. The rest of the family have scattered to many successful pursuits.

C.J. Blondheim is "Uncle Charlie" to an entire community, and lives with his son, J.S. Blondheim, near the old home. As they were active in the early days so is the Blondheim family still a force in the community life.

L.P. Emery was a Minnesota pioneer, his parents having moved to Minnesota when he was very young. Curiosity in respect to new lands and the pioneering instinct was his natural heritage. Mr. Emery came to Alberta in 1898 and travelled over much of the territory then opening up. He particularly liked the Conjuring Creek district and landed in Leduc with two carloads of good stock in the same week as the Blondheim family.

His house was like other pioneer homes, the stopping place of many former friends and neighbors who followed to investigate this last great west. His daughter, Mrs. Cook, and Stanley Blondheim are the only two of the old timers to be at present residing on the original family filing.

The early days may not be mentioned or records perused without hearing and seeing the name of Bush, or Rosebush as sometimes given. It was a habit with the older members of this family to use the homestead right, But under proper presentation of the urgent need of a newcomer to that particular quarter-section, to abandon it and repeat on some other quarter. In this way many of the new

arrivals were able to purchase ready-made habitation on a homestead. Alex Bush was further renowned for his agility in swallowing a real sword, making a spectacular feature at every gathering in the pioneering days.

A.E. Faulkner and George Faulkner were among the earliest settlers. A.E. Faulkner has been ever a leader in all public movements and service. For eleven years he served on the Municipal Council, retiring voluntarily this year. Much of the splendid road development throughout the Leduc district is due to his initiative and efficiency in the work of the municipal council.

When the social life of the district required something larger than a school or private dwelling for social matters he was among the leaders in the movement that resulted in the erection of the fine hall in which we now are.

Many settlers whose names do not appear on the homestead records were pioneers and a vital force in the advancement of the district. Angus Macauley, Mr. and Mrs. John Howard and family, John, Earl, Hiram and Floyd Hamilton, J. Dalgarno, R.J. Munn, and many others, who are not old timers in the sense of twenty-five years residence, are still old timers in point of service in community life and welfare.

This sketch must of necessity be limited and the very valuable contribution of many pioneers is not slighted by omission. It would be a valuable work indeed and one for the future of the many social organizations of our district

to follow chronologically the families of the early settlers to be kept as a community record.

Now, we consider more the picture of the physical change in the district. Picture in mind the gradual transformation under the patient persistence of the pioneer, from a wooded area flooded under swollen streams and sloughs to a modern farming district of u-to-date modern homes. The surveyors left lines of definition cut through the brush in a methodical pattern and through the district there ran an old Indian pack trail from Rocky Mountain House to Edmonton. The pioneers, however, could use neither and there developed as the line of least resistance a winding trail that very literally "hit the high spots" but unfortunately did not eliminate the low spots from one homestead to another. Lines of communication. The long way round--the short way home. To Leduc for supplies in a line as "the crow flies" but with many deviations.

Settlement increased. Roads boldly came out on the road allowances here and there with connecting trails. Brush was cleared away, beaver dams opened and presently skeletons of rafts and boats were being plowed up from dry slough bottoms.

Graders and road building machinery completed the square roads. Necessary detours were surveyed. Fences defined the exact area of the holdings. "No trespass" signs were a possibility. Homes were an accomplished fact--telephones, automobiles, rural delivery of mail, water and light, halls, schools, churches, playgrounds,

radios, communication and transport swift and sure. A beautiful countryside but doubly beautiful to you, Old Timer, who saw it then and see it now, who took it then and made it "now". To you, Old Timer, the honor and the praise. And picture with us what this will be when another and another generation shall have become Old Timers too.

Part 2: Written by Clarence Stout former Edmonton newspaper man and now editor for Texaco News at CFCN, Calgary.

From early morning on a grey, chill day in late April, 1895, a wheezy mixed train of freight cars and two ancient passenger coaches labored northward from Calgary over a rickety track and mere apology of a roadbed. New-comers who had been lured to this far-off Canadian N.W.T. as a new land of promise, looked out of car windows on straggling villages, scattering homesteads and on white stretches of snow remaining in coulees in the south and in the interminable acres of timber along the track in the north.

One woman passenger was bound for Fort Edmonton, where her son had just died. She was told by Conductor Clarke, who ran the first train into South Edmonton the previous year, that it was doubtful if she could cross the Saskatchewan river owing to the running ice. It was a late spring in the frontier country.

About 6 o'clock at night Leduc was reached. A woman and boy got off the train. Clouds were scudding low and an icy wind from the northwest gave a hint of more snow. The lonely little station and platform appeared to be set down in the midst of a lake. Backed up to the platform in this water was an old farm wagon waiting for the newcomers. They splashed through the "town" of Leduc, consisting of a combination store and post office on the spot where the Pioneer store now stands, conducted by Messrs. Douglas and Telford, and a tiny log hotel still forming part of the Waldorf that was run by Mrs. Telford. The hamlet afforded as dismal a picture in the mud and water and growing dusk as ever disheartened settlers looked upon. It's memory never fades.

The wagon rumbled over ice and through more mud and timber and sloughs along a shadowy trail to a log house set among the trees on a high hillside five miles east of Leduc. This was the home of the brother-in-law of the woman, Adam Simonton, one year previously from central Kansas and one of the first farmers in the Leduc district--the most enthusiastic booster of the new country that ever wagered the government \$10 he could live in it three years without starving.

The woman was Mrs. Mary Simonton and the boy was her son. Five days earlier they had left far away western Kansas for "Leduck" Canada, and here they were ready for the great adventure that had suddenly lost all its glamour, even for the boy.

The husband, James F. Simonton, step-father of the boy, arrived a day or so later with the car of household effects, measure farming equipment and three horses. Accompanying Simonton in the car as a "stowaway" was a French Canadian self-styled "professor" from Montreal, a portly, pompous man named Moran, whose family lived in western Kansas. "Professor" Moran proceeded to Edmonton later taking up school teaching in the Fort Saskatchewan district. Amongst many other scientific accomplishments, which he readily admitted, he was supposed to be able to fell any tree on any desired sector of a circle. To the disappointment of the boy he never by practice exhibited his skill with the axe.

One passenger fare and the car transportation from Kansas had exhausted the treasury of the Simonton clan. For that reason they didn't leave Canada on the next train, due to leave for Calgary at the end of the week. Furthermore, Mrs. Simonton who had come reluctantly to the country was now the most determined to stick it through. Simonton attached himself to the entourage of a professional "land guide" at Leduc who did wonderful things in the way of land selection, for a fee. With Simonton under this expert guidance were Messrs Griffiths, Shomberg and John McEwen, who had just arrived from central Kansas, thanks to the gripping description of the country broadcast "back home" by the enthusiastic Adam Simonton.

West of Leduc a few miles there was scarcely a house to be seen but, sticking to the Pigeon Lake trail, the land guide led his party to Conjuring Creek, declaring that all the land nearer town had been homesteaded in the rush of 1894. He had "located" a handful of other Kansas settlers at the Creek a few months earlier.

Back to the land office at the hamlet of Metaskiwin went the four men and for \$10 each filed on section 12-49-27 west of the 4th meridian, Shomberg taking the N.W., Giffith the E.W., McEwan the S.W., and Simonton the N.E. quarters. Grand new survey lines through the timber outlined their new domains.

Simonton had but \$12.50 in cash left when he had settled with the government. The use of silver currency under the denomination of 25 cents was still a novelty in this new land and the prices were extremely high, sugar selling at 8 pounds for the dollar and other commodities corresponding.

Out to Conjuring Creek again and the new settlers joined forces in building a log house for J.F. Simonton. They did this in two days under the direction of Adam Simonton. Asleep under their wagon the first night they were roused by a big black bear prowling almost at their feet, who made good his escape in the semi-darkness despite the fact that the cool-headed men from the plains looked for their guns with much gusto for a considerable time. The boy some time after successfully cleared the region of bears when he went abroad with a boomerang fashioned out of

a willow root, a spear tipped with steel, an old corn knife for a sword and a fierce looking dagger filed out of a stove poker.

The log house, first habitation south of the Pigeon lake trail on the Creek which it crossed two miles north, somewhat altered, still stands on its original site on the Simonton farm. Later, before the arrival of their families Shomberg and Griffith built more imposing houses of hewn logs, the former being somewhat skilled with the broadaxe. The Shomberg house until a few years ago at least, stood where it was first built on the farm later occupied by Sylvester Swartz, Dixie Smit and the present owner. Griffiths' house was destroyed with all their effects by fire some months later when Griffiths was back in the States working to raise more money. He had been an inspector of schools in Kansas and had settled on the land with lofty ideas and a little reserve of cash that rapidly vanished. He never came back after his house burned and his wife and two children later joined him in Washington.

Early in May, 1895, the Simonton family moved out to their new estate. The road was terrible for a wagon loaded with household effects. It wound across sloughs, through timber and failed dismally in the attempt to maintain itself on high ground and avoid the mudholes. It circled northwest of Leduc, considerably north of the present "Blind Line" through the German colony of Kuhn, Bederman and others,

crossed back to the "Two Shack Ranch" locality, and finally turned south again on the school land opening one mile east of where Calmar now stands.

On the edge of this opening half a mile to the south was the Postle home, first house to be reached in the settlement after the fifteen-mile roundabout road from Leduc. One mile west on the "Cut line" as it became known later was the log house of A.S.F. Buckell, head of a little band of settlers from Kansas who had arrived in March 1895. This party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Buckell, daughter Agnes, and sons Alfred and D'Arcy; Mr. and Mrs. A.S.F. Reed, who located a short distance west of Calmar of today; Mr. and Mrs. Postle, parents of Mrs. Reed and Jennie and Len Postle; George Wilkerson and family; William Wilkerson, his brother; Charles Buckell, brother of "Ted", and a young man named Wilson. The Wilkersons were one mile south of Buckell's and one mile west. Charley Buckell was three miles southwest. Alf Buckell, Len Postle, Charley Buckell and Wilson had "located" some of the homesteads in the fall of 1894, building the Buckell house and spending the winter there before the other families arrived from Kansas early in 1895.

However honors as first settlers on the Creek went to a little group from Minnesota who in the spring of 1894 homesteaded the half-section later acquired by Ephriam Alpaugh and son John James. These were: a man named Wosso and his wife and two small children, Gus LeClair, brother of

Mrs. Mosso, and a nephew of the two, a young man whose name has been forgotten. Mosso died in hospital at Edmonton in the fall of 1894. The others stuck it out in their little shack for a year then, much to the regret of the other few neighbors, pulled out for Minnesota. Gus McClair was a humorist of no mean order, his narrative of how he froze his nose while sitting before a roaring fire in the shack stove, being a neighborhood gem for some years. "By golly, I was smoking too," he always added when depicting the horrors of a Canadian winter to the newcomers.

Mosso's death was the first from the settlement, the next being that of the aged mother of "Ted", Charley and Will Buckell, who later came to live with Charley.

Simonton and others got a few acres of land in oats the first season. Potatoes were planted by means of a spade in the sod late in May and to the amazement of all turned out a remarkable crop in the fall. Little time could be found to attempt to improve the execrable trails that wound from place to place without regard to section lines, but a few rough bridges were built across the Creek.

The new settlers were busy in building fences, stables, and clearing as much land as possible but time was taken off on July 1, 1895, to celebrate Dominion Day when the entire neighborhood went in wagons to a point down Conjuring Creek possibly four or five miles north of Calgary. Sports and a general good time were indulged in this being the first occasion on which all the settlers had assembled

together. On the way home a call was paid at the new log shack of S.E. Blomquist, who had just settled on the farm he still occupies, but Mr. Blomquist was away. Other Swedish settlers came in during the summer from North Dakota, Anderson, Fransen, Bostrom and others arriving in 1896.

An August snow the first year rolled the rank new oat fields as flat as pancakes. On November 11 a big storm began that ended with 2 feet of snow on the level. This never drifted for there was practically no wind in those early years. Fortunately for the simontons at least the rabbits were plentiful and were easily caught in pits and with snares without having to waste precious ammunition on them. Rabbits with potatoes, eggs and a little flour and sugar stayed off starvation until a more generous crop was harvested the next year. Honey was almost an unknown factor and there was no market at any price for butter, eggs and such produce in Leduc. Edmonton was to all practical purposes as far away as Mars. We saw it for the first time on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee celebration for Queen Victoria. North and South Edmonton were then two straggling wooden villages, the latter grouping round the railway end of steel, and the former, reached by means of a ferry across the river, a somewhat larger hamlet overlooking the white walls of the log fort where the capital buildings now stand.

Chopping a sleigh road to Ieduc in the winter of 1896-97 by community effort was the first attempt at road-making on surveyed lines in the district. The male members of the settlement opened the town line directly east of Ted Buckell's to a point eight miles east where it connected with a trail to Ieduc, and from this was derived the name "Cut Line" which still adheres to the road one mile south of the "Blind Line" road from Ieduc to Calmar. Mail service was irregular in the first few years. Anyone going to Ieduc voluntarily obtained all the mail for the settlement and by general arrangement left it at the Postle's whence each homesteader picked it up, together with a never failing cup of tea with Mrs. Postle, as time and opportunity afforded. The aforementioned boy, was a scant 12 years at the time, still has uncomfortable recollections of numerous horseback trips to Ieduc and return by the circuitous 18-mile road, with supplies on one side and a gunny sack crammed with mail on the other side of a decrepit saddle whose strings persisted in snapping when the mettlesome saddle horse plunged belly-deep through those terrific mudholes. There were mosquitoes in those days, too.

The Alpaughs, Swartz and Fetherstones, succeeded LeClair, Shoberg and Griffiths. Fetherstone from South Edmonton had six children and this brought up the question of a school. Two Americans named Quirk and Spalding homesteaded "furthest south" in the fall of 1895 but soon departed, their quarters being occupied by the Kirkpatrick

brothers of Michigan a couple of years later, these finally giving way to John Howard of Illinois. In 1903 Robert Duncan and Fred Lyss of Kansas settled east of Ted Buckell.

The year 1896 was distinguished by two outstanding events as far as the frequently mentioned boy was concerned. One was the secret discovery and subsequent cutting down by him of the largest tree ever found in the settlement, followed by his eventual success in fashioning out of this 24-inch-in-diameter log a canoe that safely carried two persons, all this despite the scoffing of his elders and with the aid of an old axe and an adz equipped with a piece of gun barrell for a handle. The other was the unsuccessful effort to reach the magical waters of Conjuring lake, the wagons being halted by an impenetrable wall of fallen timber on the creek bank almost directly west of farms later taken up by George and Charles Elondacin.

The first school was finally built on the Alpaugh farm in 1897 by community effort, spruce logs being hauled and hewed gratis and erected with real "dove-tail" corners and surmounted by a shingle roof. Today this same building forms part of the Conjuring Creek school unit, only a short distance south of where it originally stood. The first teacher was a Miss Young of Edmonton.

The first baby born in the settlement was Wallace, son of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Wilkerson.

In those early days prior to 1900 the pioneers talked constantly of the need of a railway through the region west of Leduc and discussed the prospects of its being built within a few years. Settlers that came flocking in before the seven flood years beginning with 1900 took up the cry for a railway. Many passed on without seeing their dreams realized.

Today, in 1930, new hope rises that before many months the whistle of trains may be heard as they follow in from the west the old fifteen lake trail toward Edmonton, along which the first settlers travelled in quest of new homes on the frontier 35 years ago.

But how little a railway means now compared with what it would have meant in those early years before the advent of roads and the gas-driven vehicle. No one then dreamed of motor cars, much less of airplanes. Working in a garden fenced with poplar saplings cut in lengths and stood side by side to form a poultry-proof enclosure, the boy used to watch big eagle hawks, so numerous at the time, soar aloft in the sky and wonder what it must be like to rise airily above mother earth, and scorn willow thickets that whipped the face and neckholes in which one sank up to the knees on the way to school. Today in a much more indifferently kept garden in the City of Calgary the boy, now far along the sunset road in years, watches men in hundreds roaring by in huge airplanes overhead that make the mightiest birds slow and puny in comparison.

Let us dare voice the feeling that those early sacrifices, sufferings and labors of the first settlers of Conjuring Creek and elsewhere in Northern Alberta wilds, have aided materially in making possible the amazing progress along modern lines in the last few years witnessed in this still new land.

Part 3: Written by Mrs. John Blondheim, formerly Miss Emily Wright of the Edmonton teaching staff.

We are attempting to compile a history of our locality, and like real historians must have a geographical setting for our story. We shall take as the centre of our district the "Spruce Tree". It has stood as a landmark at the intersection of the range line and the township line between ranges 26 and 27 and served as a guide to old timers and new comers alike, until the storms of time laid it low in the summer of 1924. This memorable tree shall serve as the centre for the locality and also for the centre of the many activities which we are reviewing in our minds today.

The term "Old-Timer" has been accepted to mean anyone living in the district prior to the year 1905. This year marking the birth of Alberta as a province looms large in the minds of the pioneers, who before that had felt themselves more or less cut off from civilization and sadly missing the more advanced conditions as existing in the mother country, province or state which they had left to seek homes in the far new west. With the gift of autonomy

they began to feel that they were a link in the great chain that was to bind ocean to ocean in the mighty federation of Canada. Not that this event meant an end to their hardships and privations, by no means! But yet they felt a sort of provincial pride and a guarantee that their portion of the great west was to become the home of prosperity and influence. This, then, was the mental attitude of the western settlers in general and no doubt could apply equally to our little community of Conjuring Creek, of which we are attempting to trace the early history today. As the name itself would imply, the settlement first grew along the "Creek", for what reason no one knows but we might conjecture, first of all, that the land seekers chose his homestead where there was running water from an economic standpoint. He was then sure of a water supply for house and stock. Then, in building his first home he chose the location immediately on the creek bank for no other reason than that was the only high ground there was and the only place he could reasonably expect to dwell in safety when the floods came, for come they surely did. When the rainy season set in, there being no roads, no drainage, no open land to hasten evaporation, the whole country became a splashy waste of water and mud. The trails became one endless quagmire through which tired horses plunged and struggled from one place to another, the driver always equipped with a chain with which to pull out his load when it became "stuck" in the mud or, mayhap, to allow some neighbor to help his

stranded team to high ground by pulling upon their necks. Thus the faithful horse played his part in the days of pioneering, arousing the sympathy of his owner to a degree almost beyond imagination. It was indeed in the loss of so many faithful horses that the early settler was handicapped in developing the country to any extent.

The lack of suitable stabling and feed and the wet climate brought on such a malignant form of swamp fever that nearly all the valuable horses brought by the early settlers succumbed to this dread disease and had to be replaced by the hardier "cayuses" which were but poorly fitted for heavy agricultural work.

All these hardships, added to the lack of educational facilities and religious instructions for the growing families, made the lot of the pioneer a hard one indeed. In fact, many of those who were in a position to leave did so and the torch was thrown to the poor settler who had spent all his ready cash in getting settled and must carry on as best he could and hope for better times.

We must not think that our old timers allowed their hard lot to make them morbid or depressed, quite the contrary. Their isolated position only served to make them seek amusement and leisure among themselves, and so they reverted to pastimes as much or, in fact, more than we do now. The first social gathering of which we have record was a Christmas dinner given by the Postal family in 1895. Of the sixty-seven residents of the district at that time, sixty-five sat down to this hospitable

board, the only absentees being Mr. and Mrs. Moan.

A Christmas tree, not very big, and not very heavily laden delighted old and young quite as much as any modern electrically lighted and expensively decorated one could have done. Of this family the mother and two children, Mr. Len Foster and Mrs. Wyss, have resided almost continuously in this district up to the present day. The same spirit of hospitality and goodfellowship has made these worthy citizens revered throughout the community.

The summer season brought the picnics. The first one of which we have record was held at Mr. Jack Sanster's in the summer of 1903, and some of those who participated were Mr. Sanster's family, Alpaughs, Wolsens, Fumbles, Kennedys, Fosters, Emerys, McDonalds, Jacksons, Mrs. Weddle, Miss Lawson, an early teacher in the Fumble school, and others. If there was any attempt at a gathering of this kind prior to this time we have no record of it.

The first camping expedition we hear of was also in 1903 when Mrs. Simonton, her son, Clarence Stout, Mrs. Emery, her two daughters, Myrtle and Maizie, and Lyons and D'Arcy Buckle, spent a week on the shore of Conjuring Lake fishing and picking berries, thus combining business and pleasure as they had to do in those strenuous times. However they got a great deal of pleasure out of it and played they were bathing beauties and were scared by real "honest to goodness" bears, and all the rest of it, in the truly modern way.

This was the beginning but not the end of the part that Conjuring Lake played in the lives of these people. Boating and fishing became a favorite pastime both for pleasure and profit and many were the fish stories that have since delighted the hearts of the rising generation. One worthy of mention being that of "Grannie" Hamilton who caught the record size fish, but of course the figures vary with the telling as is permissible in all fish stories.

Then as for organized sports. Baseball, football and tennis were followed up as rigorously as needed be. The first baseball team was composed of W. Arce and Taft Buckle, Clarence Stout, Saunders, Irving Ferris, Ernest, Will, and Charlie Howard, John Clondheim and other enthusiasts, as they grew up and had the courage to don the mask or the big mitt. A regulation tennis court was made at Mr. Baerster's and it had its many devotees.

The long cold winter brought its rounds of dances and skating and hockey games. Even though neighbors were far apart it did not hinder large crowds gathering for "Where there's a will--there's a way". The way nearly always was in a sleigh or on horseback. Indeed the saddle was an article that was nearly always in use as that was the most convenient way of travel both for men and for women. A few of the more decorous side saddles were brought among the effects of the early settlers but were soon discarded as riding astride was safer, more comfortable, and easier on the horse. We must not pass lightly over the dances of the early days. Think of those night, boys,

when the meagerly furnished little old house was emptied of all but the cook stove in order that we might dance two sets and get a real "go" at a ruse polka to the melodious strains of the fiddle in the able hands of Fred Kirkpatrick, accompanied by his sister-in-law, Mrs. George Kirkpatrick, on the organ or melodeon. The music was good, the floor was strong, the calico dresses were pretty, hearts were happy, and no one knows but those who have participated what real enjoyment was induced from this simple pastime.

Don't think that these events were all the same. We hear of a masquerade at the Simonton's and a calico ball at the Emery's that were planned and carried out with as much enthusiasm as at the present time and didn't we dance for eleven hours straight in John Howard's new house, the second frame house in the district, preceeded only by that built by Grandpa and Grandma Satl a year or two before.

As the crowds grew and the little homes did not, the more public spirited in the community began to dream of a real place to dance and the building of a community hall was started in 1901. For years, four rounds of logs just south of Mr. Lancaster's house testified to this well meant effort until fire ruthlessly destroyed the last trace. Not until November 1925 was this dream realized in the formal opening of the present Conjuring Lake Community Hall on land leased from Angus Macaulley.

We could never forgive our historian if he did not devote a long, long paragraph to hockey, the sport in which Conjuring Creek excelled, having been known to wrest a championship and cup from Leduc players. The scarred photo we saw the other day shows the said cup surrounded by its guard of honor, namely Clarence Stout, Bill Howard, D'Arce Buckle, Lee Wherry, Len Hostle, Charlie Howard, Dave Holson and Saunders. They look as if they could play real hockey and we believe they did as we know of one man left minus a whole row of front teeth for the rest of his life, a result of having stopped the puck in other than the prescribed manner. The practise ground for this team was the rink on Sangster's lake which was well fitted up and even equipped with lamps which, we learn, were the gift of Lord Strathcona, whose interest had been solicited in the encouragement of this sport.

The only other sport that the District was famous for was foot racing and we had a few sprinters of whom we were justly proud, particularly Clarence Stout, who tried for the Western Canadian championship and won special mention.

We must not turn to the darker side of the early life and mention some of the tragic happenings. First was the murder of Mr. Heddle in 1902, by Charlie Buckle who was stricken with sudden mania; he himself passing away a few days after. Those who witnessed the tragedy were Mr. Yeomans, Frank Clifford, Bowman Swartz and Sidney Price. In the spring of the same year a settler by the

name of Duncan committed suicide, leaving a young wife and family to face life alone. In December, 1903, the neighborhood was again stricken with sorrow when Lee Emery died from injuries inflicted by an enraged bull. About the same time another family was plunged in grief when little Anna Pederson was drowned near her home. In 1908 Merton Howard lost his life while employed on a steamer near Nascap, N.C. One of the Weatherstonehaugh brothers was killed in the Fernie mine disaster. Other serious though not fatal accidents also occurred. Don Mackenzie lost a leg and other less serious happenings marred the serenity of the days.

Even with these tragic incidents before our minds we must admit that the district was particularly fortunate in sustaining so few losses and experiencing so few casualties. In many, many cases the entire family grew up in health and happiness and while many have remained to carry on the agricultural pursuits so bravely commenced by their parents quite a number of the youth of the district have left to follow up other vocations than farming.

Alfred Edward Teasdale Buckle who was the first teacher of Humble school, studied and practiced medicine. Clarence Stout who did so much to encourage and organize sport in the community has followed newspaper work for many years and is now with the Calgary Herald. Earl and Iran Hamilton left to engage in railroad work for a number of years, later returning and settling near the old scenes.

Myrtle and Maise Emery were among the first raised in the district to become teachers. Miss Jennie Postle became the first graduate nurse. Dave Tolson has become connected with the textile trade in Toronto. Charles Howard is in the mercantile business in Edmonton. Ray Emery, Ernest Howard, Ed Rath and Ernest Rath went to Edmonton to engage in engineering. Ernest Rath has returned in recent years to farm near the old home. Francis Wrennan is a Commercial Traveller in Alaska and Jim Vain handles real estate in the southern part of the province.

When the great war broke out in 1914 this community gave its quota of brave men to defend the Empire. Those who saw active service were Walter Sangster, Frank Blondheim, Jack Hughes, Dave Dunker, W. Boyce, Floyd Hamilton, Len Postle, William Littlewood, Fred Rye, Sid Blondheim and Vernard Stubbs. Walter Sangster made the supreme sacrifice and Frank Blondheim lost a leg in active service overseas.

The first business organisation of any kind in this district was the Farmer's Co-operative store which was started in the building now occupied by Hoffman's Ltd., Calmar. Later a government creamery was started just west of the Spruce Tree on Conjuring Creek. This creamery was operated on a joint stock basis for the years 1907-8-9. These ventures were the efforts on the part of the settlers to obtain a market for their produce which had now grown to quite an extent as they had got more and more land under

cultivation and were able to grow grain and rear stock in really paying quantities. The marketable grain, too, was calling for an outlet. The first to be marketed was by Ephraim Alpaugh and was hauled to Leduc to the elevator there, which was operated by horse power.

It has been mentioned that the commonest and most convenient mode of travel was by horseback, but when it came to hauling home the family supplies a conveyance less unwieldy than the lumber wagon was desired and a very good counterpart of the Red River Cart used by pioneers of Manitoba was made from the hind wheels of a wagon. This with a box arranged upon it made a vehicle which combined the greatest possible capacity with the least possible draft. Some of the settlers brought democrats and top buggies with them but the latter were mostly sold or exchanged for stronger conveyances which would better suit the rough, muddy roads. These sufficed until about 1914 when Bob Dunn's old Ford rambled up the range line, the vanguard of the motor travel and transportation of the present day.

As for heavy hauling of lumber and lumber camp supplies nothing could take the place of the patient ox team; none too patient, alas, when attacked by the hungry horde of mosquitos and black flies. Most notable among these teams was Billy Kennedy's "Buck and Bright" purchased from Grandma Buckle for the sum of ninety dollars. They did noble duty for man for years and the yoke they bore still remains to attest their merit, while their carcasses

most probably went the way of their kind--into Pat Burn's best Ham Bologna.

Part 4: Written by Mrs. J.E. Cook, formerly Maise Emery, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. I.I. Emery who settled in the Conjuring Creek district in 1899.

Conjuring Creek and Conjuring lake were formerly called Wizard Creek and Wizard lake. The lake lies 40 miles southwest of Edmonton and is about 7 miles long by 1/2 mile wide. Because it is very deep, the Indians believed it to be bottomless and endowed it with supernatural powers, hence the name "Wizard" later "Conjuring". I have never been able to find out the real Indian name of the lake so must take the English interpretation.

DAYS OF RESOURCEFUL HOUSEWIVES

Those were the days of resourceful housewives and necessity mothered a lot of inventions. When the larder ran low, as it often did, and the roads were too muddy to make feasible a trip to Leduc, the coffee grinder was brought into use. There always seemed to be a little bit of wheat stored away somewhere and the family took turns grinding this in the coffee mill. Then it was sifted and the coarser meal used for porridge and puddings and the finer for bread and biscuits.

The most popular flour stocked in Leduc 30 years ago, in fact the only brand in stock most of the time, was "Strong Bakers". There were three grades of this brand--

dark, darker and darkest. The darkest was not extensively used in this district as it was thought to consist of floor sweepings. I might mention here that Strong Bakers was really a dual purpose flour--it both fed and clothed us. Instead of rayon linerie we wore Strong Baker linerie, either "au naturelle" or semi-bleached. We used Strong Baker table linen, bed linen, window curtains and drapes, and after a visit to the dye-pot the sacks were made into shirts, aprons, dresses and even sun-bonnets.

Tea-dust was perhaps the most widely used beverage. It usually consisted of a little tea and a lot of dust. Coffee was often made from crusts of bread dried and browned in the oven or from barley treated in the same way.

The most widely used meat was rabbit. It might be boiled or stewed, fried or roasted, corned or dried, frizzled or hashed, braised or spiced. It might be in soups, pie, croquettes, fricasse or sausage but it was sure to be there. For a change there was partridge, prairie chicken and wild duck. Occasionally there was fish, suckers from the mouth of Conjuring Creek in the spring, and pike from the lake in the summer.

Dried apples and syrup were the staple desserts. The syrup was not "White Lily" but was a rich brown in color and had a powerful flavor. On special occasions there were dried peaches or prunes. Most years, however, we were able to gather large quantities of wild strawberries, raspberries, blue berries, gooseberries, saskatoons and cranberries. These were preserved until the supply of sugar

ran low, then we canned them without sugar, and finally when all the sealers were full we dried the remainder. This last was not an unqualified success however, as we found that when we tried to use the dried berries they had forgotten what they had been originally and no amount of coaxing could restore them to their former appearance and flavor.

Berry picking time was much enjoyed as several families usually went to the berry patch to gather, took picnic lunch and combined business and pleasure. Many berry picking contests were held in most of which Walter Blondheim carried off the honors.

Until 1900 the vegetables grown were potatoes, carrots, beets, cabbage, turnips and ruta bagas (or "beegies" as they were generally called). Owing to there being water in most of the cellars, from 1900 to 1905 many farmers wintered their vegetables in root houses. Any old timer will describe a root house for you.

Vegetables, like rabbits, were served in many different ways. Carrots would appear in soups and stews or mashed, creamed or fried and they would be somewhat camouflaged in pies, puddings, preserves and pickles. "Beegies", too, appeared in many different guises, and some housewives with active imaginations served them with cream and sugar for dessert. In fact when one lady was so extravagant as to have canned pineapple for Sunday night supper, a neighbor boy who was visiting there had difficulty in cutting his slice of pineapple with his spoon. It hopped

out of his fruit dish and he promptly shouted, "Whoop! there goes my beanie."

Wild fruit bushes were transplanted into vegetable gardens and under intensive cultivation increased in production. To Mrs. Simonton goes the honor of introducing the first tame fruit shrubs. As early as 1902 she had successfully ripened both red and white strawberries as well as raspberries and currants. Her garden was well stocked with flowers, both annual and perennial. This energetic woman was the first to raise successfully the less hardy vegetables such as beans, tomatoes, corn and cucumbers.

The pioneer women were all good cooks but each one was famed particularly for her skill in preparing some special dainty. Mrs. Sanster was noted for her pies; Mrs. John Howard for her hens; Mrs. Geo. Blondheim and Mrs. Brennan for bread; Mrs. Pederson for butter and cheese; Mrs. Mary for fried partridge and carrot pies; Mrs. Chas. Blondheim for steamed puddings; Mrs. Ferris and Mrs. Kennedy for homemade candies; Mrs. Boulson, meat pies; Mrs. Thos. Humble, ginger cookies; Mrs. Am. Math, roast mutton; Mrs. John Hamilton, fruit cake; Mrs. Simonton, fancy cakes and cookies; Mrs. Wiram Hamilton (Granma), chocolate layer cake; Mrs. Ted Buckell, native wine; Mrs. Wyss, roast beef and chicken; Mrs. Postle, pastry and tea; Mrs. Geo. Wilkerson, berry pies; Mrs. Ephraim Alpaugh, fried chicken; Mrs. Kain, whole-wheat pan cakes and raspberries preserved in the oven; while Mrs. McLellan was

equally popular for her raspberry pies and for her six fine daughters.

LUMBERING

The funds the early settlers brought with them were pretty well exhausted by the time they had their new homes established. There was practically nothing to sell those first years which meant little or no money coming in so a number of young men of the district went to British Columbia to work in the mines or lumber woods. Their earnings kept the families at home supplied with the necessities until the farms began to produce and markets were opened up.

In the winters of 1899 and 1900, 1900 and 1901, camps were established at Bucking Horse Lake by the men who wished to take out a supply of good spruce or poplar building logs, tamarac posts, rails, etc. The settlers who lived to the south of the district timbered at Conjuring Lake during these winters.

In 1901 Ed. Townsend brought in and operated a saw-mill on R.T. Telford's timber limit at the south west end of Conjuring Lake. Jim Law was employed as engineer and Gus Koll and Del Wilkinson made up part of the crew while Mrs. Alex. Phillips (later Mrs. Al. Marks) was cook.

In the winter of 1902 and 1903 Archie McDairmaid of Poplar Lake, son of the homestead inspector, did custom sawing at J.A. Sangsters, later moving his mill to a site across the road from L.L. Emery's farm buildings. His crew consisted of Billy Simpson, Harry Barnes, Ray Emery,

and Messrs. Dunlop and Ferguson.

In 1903 Horace Kirk and a Mr. Verkhart operated a sawmill owned by Geo. Bevington of Spruce Grove on the north side of Conjuring Lake at what is now known as McLenzi's Landing.

Later on mills were run at Pigeon Lake by Andrew Dilley of this district, Mr. Ferguson of Ellerslie and Mr. Mullin, and still later, mills were started at Sunnybrook, some of which are still operating.

In addition to furnishing the farmers with reasonably cheap lumber for building purposes, these mills made it possible for the settlers to obtain winter work for themselves and their teams near home. Millions of feet of lumber were moved from these mills to the towns of Leduc and Willet by the men and boys of this community.

EARLY MARRIAGES

The earliest wedding of which we have record was that of Lizzie Alpaugh and Reginald Jarvis which took place on December 6th, 1899. While this marriage ceremony was performed in Revelstoke, B.C., Miss Alpaugh had lived on the Creek several years prior to this. Mr. and Mrs. Jarvis are now living in Nelson, B.C.

Eary Blondheim, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C.J. Blondheim, and Tom Barrett were married on January 9th, 1901. Mr. Barrett died some ten years ago and Mrs. Barrett and children are living in Revelstoke.

On August 25th, 1902, Nell McLellan and Geo. Faulkner were united in marriage. To this couple goes the honor of raising the largest family in the district, fourteen children being born to them, most of whom are living with their parents at Minburn, Alberta.

Agnes Buckell and Frank Bill were married early in January, 1903, and are now living in Vaughn, Washington. A little bit later the wedding of Louise Blondeim and Kenneth Corbett, and that of Dot Wood and Ed. Southwick took place. The former are now living in Detroit, Michigan, while the latter reside on their farm near Leduc. Millie Howard and Dixie Smith were married in 1907, as also were Edna Hamilton and D'Arcy Buckell who now live in Vaughn, Wash. Since 1906 we have had several marriage epidemics as is evidenced by the fine crop of young hopefuls growing up on the Creek today.

BIRTHS

The first birth in the district was that of Nellis Wilkerson who arrived at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Wilkerson, June 20th, 1896. Little Miss Wilkerson came to the same home February 22th, 1898, and was named Agnes Kate in honor of Agnes Buckell and Kate Foster, later, Mrs. Bill and Mrs. Wyss.

DEATHS

The death of Ann Teasdale Buckell, commonly called Grandma Buckell in 1900 was the first break in the steadily growing community. A demetery was dedicated on her homestead. A n epidemic of Scarlet Fever spread through the

south end of the district in 1902 causing the death of Ruth Kirkpatrick, the four-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Kirkpatrick who lived on the quarter-section now occupied by A.E. Faulkner.

SCHOOLS

On April 18th, 1898, the Conjuring Creek school, No. 415, opened in the log building which had served as a Presbyterian church and which is still in use as a junior class room. Miss Mary Carruthers was teacher and the pupils in attendance were: Alex. and Ernie Petherstone, Agnes and D'Arcy Buckell, Clarence Stout, Sadie and Alex Alpaugh, Edith and Bauman Swartz. Messrs. Alpaugh, Postle and Buckell served on the first board of trustees.

Humble School No. 532, was erected in the spring of 1900 and opened on August 23rd of the same year with Taff Buckell as teacher. The following constituted the first board of trustees: Geo. Kirkpatrick, Secretary, A.F. Dahlquist, Treasurer, and Thos. Humble, upon whose land the school was built, and after whom it was named, chairman. The first pupils enrolled were: Jessie and Walter Gunster, Clifton and Nellie Richmond, Ansel, Chester and Winnie Walton, Will Humble, Ward and Edith Youmans, Cecil, Charley and Jim Wood, Myrtle and Malsie Emery. The first school inspector to visit these districts was Mr. Perrett who was succeeded by Mr. Geo. Bryan, who in turn was succeeded by Mr. Jos. McCaig.

Conjuring Lake school district was formed on Jan. 23rd, 1908, and opened with Miss Florence McLellan in command in the log house standing vacant on Mr. Bell's south quarter-section. Mr. A. Macauley, Mr. C.J. Blondheim and Mr. Dalgarno made up the first board of trustees and six young Blondheims and three young McLellans were enrolled the first year the school was in operation.

CHURCHES

The first church service was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ted Buckell in '96 with Rev. Grey officiating. This minister is now Bishop of the Edmonton Diocese. Later a Presbyterian church was built which was afterward sold to the school board. Ministers who preached in the district in the early days were Reverends Dickey, Shaw and Ferguson.

In the southern part of the community Reverend Mr. McDonald held services in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Hamilton, Sr., as early as 1900, while Rev. Father Jan brought cheer and comfort to the homes of his followers in the early part of the century.

LIVE STOCK

Almost every pioneer farmer had his little herd of cattle, mostly grade stuff, but very important assets in his scheme of existence. To Mr. Ted Buckell is accredited the first herd of pure-breds. They were Shorthorns and were a much prized addition to the community. Mr. Emery brought the first pure-bred Jersey owned locally with him from the United States, and some of the same strain is still to be seen on the old Emery farm. Mr. T. Buckell owned the first

registered horse. He was a Percheron and was named Headlight or was it Electric Light?

The Howard bosy, Will and Chas., owned the first pure-bred hens. They were Langshans and were imported from Illinois.

Mr. Fetherstone owned the first sheep. Wm. Rath purchased them later.

No live stock record would be complete without mention being made of Waldo Blodgett's old grey mule. With no particular lineage it had the temperament and voice of a prima donna.

For the foregoing information we are indebted to many Old Timers, particularly Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Wilkerson, Mr. and Mrs. Wyss, Mrs. Simonton, Mr. C.J. Blondheim, Mr. and Mrs. Sangster, Mr. John T. Ross and Mr. C.H. Stout.

CONJURING CREEK NEWS FROM A DIARY WRITTEN IN 1895.

The first settler on Con-Creek was Mrs. Rosso and Gus LaClare, then in Sept. 1894, Mr. Ted Buckell, his son Alf, Wm. Wilkerson and Geo. Wilkerson homesteaded there. Mrs. Buckell, Mrs. Andy Reed, Mrs. Geo. Wilkerson and their children following the men, March 11, 1895. After the men had spent the winter and didn't freeze to death.

May 27th, 1895. Rain, rain, rain which turned to snow an inch deep in the morning. 15 Indians passed the Wilkerson cabin and scared Mrs. W. nearly stiff when they came for bread.

Alf. Buckell saw 2 bear, one very large and we heard a moose had been shot near the Creek by an Indian. Coyotes and mink and lynx were often shot.

About June 16th of the same year Mr. and Mrs. Symigton and son came to settle near us.

June 28th, 15 grown people and 6 children held our 1st picnic.

August 23, Geo. and William Wilkerson saw a large bear and lynx which made their hair stand up.

Sept. 29, after being a year on the Creek our first church service was held at Mr. T. Buckells, the minister sitting on the heater and letting us have the chairs. Topic: Christian Fellowship.

Cook

Conjuring Creek -41

Feb. 4th, 1896, first party--a surprize on Mr. and Mrs. Jim Symington. 28 grownups and 7 children enjoyed themselves until 2 o'clock. Mrs. T. Buckell had to (Cross the Swamp)* with Mr. Jim Symington. She was so surprized and he said "I knowed I'd have to kiss her quick. Geo. Wilkerson (Picked Cherries)* with Mrs. Jim Symington, which caused lots of fun too.

*Evidently a game.

The next party was at Andy Reed's, March 20, 1896, lots of fun there too.

Wallis Wilkerson was the first baby born on Con-Creek June 20th, 1896.

Then Agnes Kate Wilkerson, Feb. 22, 1898.